

Translators Notes

You've probably noticed by now that this series is very heavy on footnotes! I'll use inline footnotes as often as I can, but sometimes there's just too much to squeeze in...

Enkaku and Chussey have been friends for the past twenty years, so Enkaku has nicknamed him "Kyougaku" after the name of his used bookstore, "Kyougokudou." Kyougoku never seems to actually sell any of his books, but he's obviously read (and memorized!) all of them.

Yes, the character is named after the author and is an obvious self-insert!

page 76 Kyougoku references Ueda Akinari's "Ugetsu Monogatari" ("Tales of the Moon and Rain"), a famous collection of supernatural short stories. In "The Cauldron of Kibitsu Shrine", Ison, the daughter of the priest of Kibitsu Shrine is engaged to Shoutarou, an unfaithful man. The shrine is home to a magic iron pot that, when used to boil water as part of a divination ritual, is supposed to make a pleasant sound if good luck is predicted. The priest performs the ritual before his daughter's wedding, but the cauldron remains silent. However, breaking an engagement is seen as a bringer of bad luck, so the marriage of Ison and Shoutarou goes on. Almost immediately, Shoutarou leaves his new wife and runs off to the city with his mistress. Ison does her best to be a good and dutiful wife - even going so far as to financially support her dishonest husband and his mistress - but she dies alone and unappreciated. Ison's suppressed resentment transforms her into an evil spirit. She kills the mistress, begins to terrorize Shoutarou. Shoutarou visits an onmyouji magician, who orders him to spend 42 days in purification within a protective magical barrier. For the first few days, Ison's spirit screams and tries to break the barrier, but eventually she goes silent. By the 41st day, Shoutarou has grown tired of waiting. He leaves the barrier... and Ison's spirit murders him, leaving only his severed head behind.



page 80 Kyougoku mentions an old, nearly extinct Japanese religion known as "Koushin" which incorporated elements of Taoism, Shinto, Buddhism and folk shamanisms. While Koushin thrived during the Edo period (1604-1868), it was banned during the Meiji era (1868-1912). However, it's still possible to see little hints of Koushin in Shinto and Buddhist religious sites. For instance, the 'see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil' monkeys were originally a symbol of Koushin. A chief tenet of Koushin is that every person's body is host to three worms. The worms leave the body on the last day of every 60-day cycle to report the person's sins to the Heavenly Emperor. In order to avoid punishment, Koushin practitioners stay awake and party throughout the 60th night so the worms won't be able to make their report. Koushin believers also worshipped a demon of disease who was able to slay and suppress the worms.

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Chapter 02



SO THERE'S
THE DETECTIVE,
THE ASSISTANT,
AND THE CLIENT...

WHAT
THE HELL
DO YOU
WANT?

Chapter 02









AND HE'S
KIND OF
SHOCKINGLY
BLUNT.

HE REMINDS
ME OF ONE
OF THOSE
ASCETIC
MOUNTAIN
PRIESTS.



SO THIS IS
CHUJINJI-SAN...



YES, I'M
SETTLING A
MATTER
FOR MASAOKA
KASANO.



OH, RIGHT.
THEY SAID
HE RECITES
PRAYERS
AS A SIDE
BUSINESS...



A JOKE?
YOU
MEAN AN
EXERCISE?

NOTE "Kasano" is the Japanese name of the Chinese deity He Xiang, one of the Eight Immortals.



W-WHAT ARE
KASANO-KO?
YOU
MEAN THE
FAMOUS
FORTUNE
TELLER?



UM...
SORRY...



YEAH,
THAT'S
HER.



I CAN'T
BELIEVE
HE KNOWS
SOMEONE
THAT
FEARFUL.



I'VE HEARD
THAT SHE'S A
MYSTERIOUS
SHAMANESS
WHO WORKS FOR
POLITICIANS AND
BUSINESSMEN.

I MEAN .
YOU KNOW
THAT
INDIAN
KASHMIRI... ?



BUT
THIS HAS
GROWN
INTO A REAL
PROBLEM.

SHE FEELS THAT
SOME OF HER
FREQUENT CLIENTS
HAVE GROWN
TOO DEPENDENT
ON HER FORTUNE-
TELLING, SO SHE'S
TAKING A BREAK.

SHE COULD
HANDLE ONE OR
TWO PROBLEM
CUSTOMERS.



YES, SHE'S
NO LONGER
PERFORMING
DIVINATIONS.

RE-
TRY?

SHE'S
RETURNING,
THOUGH.



NOTE Pot is "kama" in Japanese.



NOTE

There's nothing a pot
 Since this Japanese thing for a
 dresser or refrigerator
 guy was in "kama" and "kama"
 is the word for a cooking
 pot, he's saying that
 Masu tried to protect
 the "kama" at the bar



YOU LOOK
Tired.
YOU SHOULD
SLEEP
TOO!



BARBAR, GO
AHEAD AND
EXPLAIN THE CASE
TO KIDSSONG.
I'M GOING TO
TUNE A NET!



YOU HAVE
THE LARGEST
SHOULDER
OF ANYONE

NOW
THE POT
IS COLLING
THE
KETTLE
BLACK!



IT'S
BETTER
EXPLAIN
THEN

YEAH
WELL





AND FOR SOME REASON
OR ANOTHER,
HE CAME TO
OUR OFFICE
FOR HELP.



...SO
THAT'S
THE
STORY.



THAT'S
KIND OF
THOUGHT-
FUL.

HE
GENTLY
ADDED
SOMEONE'S
NAME
OR PHYSICAL
APPEARANCE.



NO.

BA
BA
BA

WELL,
THAT WOULD
BE A GOOD
START...



SOT?

WHAT DO YOU
WANT ME TO DO?
AND THOSE
WERE A STEEN
LECTURE?



AT LEAST YOU
I'M NOT RUNNING
A DOMESTIC
COMMUNITY
SERVICE
ORGANIZATION
HERE.



OH COME ON,
AT LEAST, THINK OF
HOW MANY OTHER
GIRLS ARE
SUFFERING
BECAUSE OF
THOSE ASSHOLES!



THE GIRL
HE'S
MARRYING.
SHINOBU
RETURNED.

NOTE The National Diet is Japan's legislature. (The name comes from the Latin word *dieta*, which means "parliament".)





OWW...

CON-
SPIR-
ACY?

HA...
THIS
RAISES THE
POSSIBILITY
THAT THE
MARRIAGE
PROPOSAL
IS A
CONSPIRACY

AND THAT
SOUNDS
LIKE MY
KIND OF
JOB



A CONSPIRACY?

I GUESS IT'S POSSIBLE THAT SAKURAI
TETSUYUKI'S FATHER, SAKURAI JUZOU, IS ALSO
A CLIENT OF MASARU KASANO...

THAT COULD BE HOW HE CAME TO KNOW
REPRESENTATIVE SHINOMURA.

SO HE COULD HAVE USED THAT TO
INGRATiate HIMSELF WITH THE SHINOMURAS...
IS THAT WHAT THEY MEAN?



HA...
IT'S POS-
SIBLE

I HAVE
A FEELING
THAT HE'S
PLAYING
DIRTY.



SAKURAI IS
TRYING TO
BLINDSIDE
SHINOMURA,
RIGHT?

SO, YOU
MEAN...



OR MAYBE
SAKURAI WAS
COLLUDING
WITH MASARU
KASANO...















WHAT
SEEMED LIKE A
HOPELESSLY
MULLED
SITUATION
IS NOW
GROWING
CLEAR.

SUDDENLY,
THOUGH, THIS
ECCENTRIC
MAN HAS
COMPLETELY
CHANGED
EVERYTHING.

SAME IS THE
DICTAHERE.
SUKURN AND
THE REST ARE
CRIMINALS.
AND I HAVE
A DETECTIVE
ON MY SIDE.



I'LL
KNOW WHAT
FUCKARDOY
THEY DESERVE
WHEN I
SEE THEIR
FACES.



FINCH
THEY?
SERI-
OUSLY?



YEAH
MAYBE
I'LL
FINCH
THEM,
TOO!

SO
YOU'RE
GOING TO
ROUGH
THEM UP?

I DO WHAT
I WANT!
AND I
WANNA KICK
SOME ASS!

WANT
YOU
RESORT TO
VIO-
LENCE?



YUP
I
WANNA
KICK
SOME
ASS





OF COURSE I'M GOING TO SUSPECT BLACK-MAIL.

WELL, WHEN TWO STRANGE MEN WHO CLAIM TO HAVE TIES TO MADAME KASINKO SUDDENLY TELEPHONE ME,



EXTORTION?

I ASSURE YOU THAT'S NOT THE CASE.





SO THIS IS SHIMOMURA GEL-ICHIRU

HE'S A POLITICIAN, SO I'M NOT SURPRISED THAT HE JUMPS TO VULGAR CONCLUSIONS.



SO IF YOU THINK I'M GOING TO TRUST YOU BASED ON WHO YOU SAY YOU ARE, THINK AGAIN

THAT'S WHY I GO TO MADAME KAGAKI.

I HAVE MANY ENEMIES. EVEN MY FRIENDS CAN BE A LIABILITY IF THERE'S A SCANDAL.



I'M NO POLITICIAN - QUITE FRANKLY, I'M LACKING IN DASH AND CHARisma

I DOUBT TO BE ABLE TO CONVINCE YOU THAT I WAS RIGHT BY MADAME KAGAKI

HOW LONG HAS IT BEEN SINCE YOU LAST SAW HER?

WHEN DID YOU LAST HAVE YOUR FORTUNE TOLD?



IF YOU'RE HERE TO THREATEN ME, I'LL HAVE MY SECRETARY ESCORT YOU OUT RIGHT NOW



WHAT IF I CAN PROVE MYSELF?







NOTE Kashinkoji was a legendary master of illusions who supposedly lived during the Edo period. He was a magician and war-tougher and a lot of a trickster.



NOTE "Kasenji Jarihiko" literally translates to "dry riverbed gravel," so it's an odd name.







MISAME KASABAKO WAS THE ONLY ONE WHO COULD PUT MY MIND AT EASE.



I DON'T LET THEM SEE ME LIKE THIS.



I HAVE MANY POLITICAL RIVALS.

NOW THAT I KNOW THERE'S A CURSE ON MY HEAD, I WON'T BE ABLE TO RELAX. IT'S TOO MUCH FOR ME TO BEAR.



BUT NOW...

WHenever my confidence faltered, I turned to her.

Her gift for prophecy surprised me time and time again.

I depended on her.



YES, I UNDERSTAND.

YOU ARE INDISPENSIBLE TO THIS COUNTRY.



I DON'T KNOW WHAT I SHOULD DO.

WITHOUT HER DIVINATIONS, THERE'S NO WAY I CAN CONTINUE IN POLITICS.





DOES THE CEREMONY FALL
ON AN INAUSPICI-
CIOUS DATE?
HAVE I INVITED
THE WRONG PARTY
OFFICIALS?

IS THERE
A PROBLEM
WITH MR.
SANTANA?



YES...
I BELIEVE
IT RELATES
TO YOUR
DAUGHTER'S
ENGAGEMENT



MY GOD,
YOU'RE RIGHT...
THAT WAS
ABOUT THE TIME
WHEN MARJORIE
KASENKO
BECAME
UNUSUALLY
EVASIVE...



I SEE...
THAT
COMPLI-
CATES
THINGS.



THAT
COMPLI-
CATES
THINGS?

THERE'S NO
WAY I CAN
CALL OFF THE
WEDDING NOW!
IT'S FAR
TOO LATE!



AS HER
FATHER,
I CAN TELL
YOU THAT MY
DAUGHTER IS
VERY STRONG-
WILLED.

MOST GIRLS
FROM HIGH-
RANKING FAMILIES
ARE LITTLE MORE
THAN Pawns
IN POLITICAL
MARRIAGES,
BUT MY GIRL
WILL HAVE NONE
OF THAT!

SHE'S BEEN
VERY ACTIVE IN
THE ENGAGE-
MENT AND THE
WEDDING
PLANS.





I'LL
USE A
SINGING
IRON POT
DIVINATION
RITUAL.



IN FACT,
THE
DIVINATION
METHOD
USED IN
"TALES OF
THE MOON
AND SUN"
IS BASED
ON A REAL
FORTUNE-
TELLING
RITUAL.

AS
EXPECTED,
YOU'RE
CLUE
WELL-
SAVED.



IN THE
STORY,
A POT
OF WATER
IS USED TO
DIVINE THE
FATE OF A
MARRIAGE.

"THE
CALLBACK
OF KOTENBU
SUNNY"

IT'S ONE OF
THE GUEST
STORIES IN
"TALES OF
THE MOON
AND SUN"



IS
THAT AN
ACTUAL
THING?

YES



AN
IRON
POT?



YES, THAT'S
RIGHT.
COOKING
POTS WERE
OFTEN USED
FOR
FORTUNE-
TELLING
IN ANCIENT
TIMES.

ARE YOU
FAMILIAR
WITH THE
WORK OF
LENA
ARAGAST?

NOTE Kibitsu Shrine is located in modern day Okayama City, about half-way between Osaka and Hiroshima.



NOTE The "Inventory of Japanese Shrines" was published around 1648.



NOTE

The story of Kikisaku and his eventually developed into the famous Japanese folk story "Kikisaku".



FINALLY, LIRA'S HEAD WAS BURIED DEEP BELOW THE SMITH'S HEARTH, IN THE BUILDING THAT IS NOW KNOWN AS THE "OKAMIZEN."

IN "A HISTORY OF KIRISHU SHRINE," IT'S SAID THAT THE GOD KIRISHU DEFEATED A DEMON CALLED LIRA. EVEN AFTER LIRA WAS DEFEATED, HIS SEVERED HEAD CONTINUED TO RAIL.

NOW, YOU MIGHT ASK WHAT A POT HAS TO DO WITH DIVINATION.

NOTE "Okamizden" means "looking out hell."



A PRIESTESS CALLED ASOME TENDED THE HEARTH, AND LITTLE BY LITTLE SHE PURGED THE DEMON WITH FIRE. THE DRAGGING VOICE ESCUED FROM A POT WAS BOILED ON THE HEARTH, BUT NOW IT SANG THE PRaises OF THE DIVINE.



TALK

TALK

TALK

THE HISTORY OF THE POT IS MENTIONED IN THE "SECRET GUIDE TO LUCKY AND UNLUCKY DAYS," PUBLISHED BY THE IMPERIAL CHAMBERLAIN KURO NO JIROBURI DURING THE CHOUROKU ERA (1157-1160), AND IN THE "HAKKAI SHU" WRITTEN BY A MONK AT TOYOHATA TEMPLE DURING THE GEN ERA (1187-1190).

THAT'S THE SHINING MYTH, OF COURSE.

IN THE TRADITIONS OF ONYXOUCUS, THE SHINING POT IS ASSOCIATED INSTEAD WITH A FEMALE DEMON CALLED HAKO.



THE "BOOK OF SPECIAL DETAILS" WRITTEN DURING THE ECHO EPOCH (1601-1622), CONTAINS THE FIRST KNOWN REFERENCE TO "KAMA" IS NOW CALLED THE "KAMADO FESTIVAL", WHERE THE GODS OF THE HEARTH ARE HONORED.

IN THE PAST, THOUGH, THIS FESTIVAL WAS CALLED "KAMAKADO", AND WRITTEN WITH THE HIRAGANA FOR "HEARTH" AND "SMELL".

KAMA AND KAMADO WERE SEPARATE, BUT INSEPARABLE.



ORIGINALLY, OF COURSE, THE "KAMA" STYLE OF ROUND IRON POT WAS MERELY A DEVICE USED TO BOIL WATER AND COOK FOOD.



IT WAS FITTED WITH A WOODEN COVER TO KEEP CLUT SOOT, AND EVENTUALLY THE LEGS WERE REMOVED SO IT COULD REST INSIDE A SPECIAL "KAMADO" OVEN.



I SEE —



ACTUALLY, THE SOUND CAME NOT FROM THE HEARTH ITSELF, BUT FROM THE COOKING POT ON THE RUMORED STEAMER HOOD.

SO, I BELIEVE THAT PEOPLE EARLY EXTENDED THE DIVINE NATURE OF THE HEARTH TO INCLUDE THE POT AS WELL.



THE SPEAKING HEARTH?



ANSWERING... WE CAN OUT-TALK A POLITICIAN!

SO OF COURSE, PEOPLE WOULD ATTACH GREAT SIGNIFICANCE TO A HEARTH THAT PROFOUNDLY MADE AN UNUSUAL SOUND.

SMOKE FROM A HEARTH RISES UPWARDS, SO IT WAS BELIEVED THAT IT COULD CARRY A FAMILY'S PRAYERS UP TO HEAVEN.









IT'S HARD
TO ASK A
MAN OVER 40
TO WEAR
WOMEN'S
CLOTHING.



WELL,
IT'S JUST
THAT...



WOMEN'S
CLOTHING?

ARE YOU
TRYING TO
MAKE A FOOL
OF ME?



I CAN'T
ASK PROUD
JAPANESE
MEN TO DO
SOMETHING SO
SHAMEFUL...

BUT...
BUT...
WOMEN'S
CLOTHING?

I ASSURE
YOU, I INTEND
NO SUCH
THING.
BUT THE
PLOT
REQUIRES
MEN TO
ACT THE ROLE
OF FEMALE
GUARDS.



IN FACT,
IT'S
ABSOLUTELY
CRITICAL
FOR THEM
TO BE
DRESSED
AS WOMEN.



ISN'T THAT
A RATHER
NARROW-
MINDED
ATTITUDE?

SHAME-
FUL?
NOW,
NOW...

Takeda Shingen and Oda Nobunaga were famous generals during the Sengoku Period





BUT...
THAT'S...



IT'S AN
ESTABLISHED
TRADITION.

SO, SINCE
ANCIENT TIMES
MEN IN
WOMEN'S
CLOTHING
HAVE
BEEN USED
TO ALLEVIATE
BAD LUCK.



THE
RITUAL IS
ALSO
MENTIONED
IN KUROKAWA
DOHKO'S
"SHINKI KIKOU,"
A BIOGRAPHY
OF THE FAMED
KENARI PLAYER
NARAH
MUNEYASU.

HE
PERFORMED
THE RITUAL
WHILE
DRESSED
IN A WOMAN'S
WHITE LONG-
SLEEVED ROBE,
WOMEN'S
SANDALS,
AND A STRING
OF PRAYER
BEADS.

THE TEMPLE
ATTENDANTS
ONLY
REALIZED
THAT HE
WAS A MAN
WHEN THEY
SAW HIS
BEARD.

NOW, YOU SEE
THAT THE RITUAL
OF IRON POT ORNA-
TION IS CLEARLY
RELATED TO
RITUALS INTENDED
TO PURGE THE
KITCHEN DEITIES.

ORIGINALLY A
PRIVATE RELIGIOUS
PRACTICE PERFORMED
IN RURAL TOWNS,
IT WAS EVENTU-
ALLY ADOPTED
BY PRIESTS
AND SHAMANS.

AS I
MENTIONED
BEFORE,
PRIESTS/SES ARE
REQUIRED FOR
THE RITUAL.

HISTORICAL
DRAWINGS SHOW
THEM AS MEN
WEARING WOMEN'S
CLOTHING.



REGARD-
ING THE
RITUAL...

SO,

I DIDN'T KNOW
THERE WAS SO
MUCH SIGNIFICANCE
TO THE PLAY ON
WORDS BETWEEN
"GAM" (GAM
POT) AND "GAM" (TRANSGESTED)...



IT'S EVEN
WRITTEN IN
SOME PEOPLE'S
"BIBLES OF
EVILITY" THAT
A BAD GEM
CAN BE INFERED
BY HAVING
WOMEN THERE
AS MEN AND
MEN THERE
AS WOMEN



OH MY GOD,
HE NEVER
STOPS
TALKING...
IS ALL OF
THIS STUFF
ACTUALLY
TRUE?



OF
COURSE
IT'S ALL
TRUE.



I'LL
ACCEPT
THAT WHAT
YOU SAY
IS TRUE.

YOU'VE
CONVINCED
ME,
KAGAKI-
KID-KUN.



ENOUGH!

I CAN'T
TAKE ANY
MORE!







I HAVE
A
FEELING

THAT
HE'S
PLOTING
SOME-
THING
REALLY
NASTY...